

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Claims 1 through 21 (cancelled)

22. (new) A method of roll forming a metal section from sheet metal strip comprising of the steps of;

differentially stretching the metal strip in its longitudinal direction so that at least one portion of the metal strip is more elongated than a laterally adjacent portion of the strip;
roll forming the differentially stretched metal strip to form a profiled section; and
bending the profiled section so as to introduce a longitudinal precamber in the profiled section.

23. (new) A method according to claim 22, wherein the metal strip is differentially stretched continuously in a longitudinal direction of the metal strip, so as to produce longitudinally extending elongated portions in the metal strip.

24. (new) A method according to claim 22, wherein portions of the metal strip shorten longitudinally in forming the profiled section and the metal strip is differentially stretched so as to compensate for the longitudinal shortening of the strip in roll forming the profiled section.

25. (new) A method according to claim 22, wherein in bending the profiled section to introduce the longitudinal precamber, the metal of the profiled section is stretched, and wherein the metal strip is differentially stretched in portions that facilitate the stretching of the metal in the profiled sections during the step of bending of the profiled section.

26. (new) A method according to claim 22, wherein the profiled section is of a generally C-shape having a pan section and upturned edge margins which extend from one face of the strip, and wherein the profiled section is bent about the face opposite to that in which the upturned edge margins of the profiled section extend.

27. (new) A method according to claim 22, wherein the metal strip is roll formed so as to be differentially stretched.

28. (new) A method according to claim 22, wherein the profiled section is caused to bend about a fulcrum to introduce the longitudinal precamber.

29. (new) A method according to claim 28, wherein the profiled section is restrained upstream of the fulcrum, and is loaded downstream of the fulcrum to induce bending of the profiled section about the fulcrum.

30. (new) A method according to claim 22, wherein portions of the metal strip shorten longitudinally in forming the profiled section and the metal strip is differentially stretched so as to compensate for the longitudinal shortening of the strip in roll forming the profiled section.

31. (new) A method according to claim 30, wherein in bending the profiled section to introduce the longitudinal precamber, the metal of the profiled section is stretched, and wherein the metal strip is differentially stretched in portions that facilitate the stretching of the metal in the profiled sections during the step of bending of the profiled section.

32. (new) A method according to claim 31, wherein the profiled section is of a generally C-shape having a pan section and upturned edge margins which extend from one face of the strip, and wherein the profiled section is bent about the face opposite to that in which the upturned edge margins of the profiled section extend.

33. (new) An apparatus for forming a metal section from sheet metal strip, the apparatus comprising;

stretching apparatus differentially stretching the metal strip in its longitudinal direction so that at least one portion of the metal strip is more elongated than a laterally adjacent portion of the strip;

roll forming apparatus roll forming the differentially stretched strip to form a profiled section; and

bending apparatus bending the profiled section so as to introduce a longitudinal precamber in the profiled section.

34. (new) A forming apparatus according to claim 33, wherein the stretching apparatus includes at least one roller engaging a portion of the metal strip and elongating the engaged portion of the strip.

35. (new) A forming apparatus according to claim 34, wherein the at least one roller has a tapered surface so as to vary the amount of stretching across said engaged portion of the metal strip.

36. (new) A forming apparatus according to claim 33, wherein the bending apparatus comprises a multiple stage device introducing a three point bend to said profiled section.

37. (new) A forming apparatus according to claim 36, wherein the bending apparatus includes a reaction stage restraining the metal strip, a fulcrum stage about which the profiled section bends, and an action stage inducing a load on said profiled section to induce bending of the profiled section about the fulcrum stage.

38. (new) A forming apparatus according to claim 37, wherein the action stage is height adjustable relative to the fulcrum stage enabling the amount of precamber introduced into the profiled section to be varied.

39. (new) A forming apparatus according to claim 37, wherein the action stage includes a shearing assembly cutting said profiled section in discrete lengths.

40. (new) A forming apparatus according to claim 39, wherein the shearing assembly comprises a shearing block receiving the profiled metal section, and a cutting element moveable relative to the shearing block, the shearing assembly and the action stage mounted to a common height adjustable assembly frame.

41. (new) A forming apparatus according to claim 40, wherein the cutting element is angularly adjustable relative to the frame.

42. (new) A shearing assembly for use in cutting a profiled metal section into discrete lengths, the shearing assembly comprising an assembly frame, a shearing block attached to the frame receiving the profiled metal section, and a cutting element moveable relative to the shearing block, wherein the shearing assembly is height adjustable so that the relative height of the shearing block can be adjusted, and wherein the cutting element is angularly adjustable relative to the frame.

43. (new) A shearing assembly according to claim 42, wherein the cutting element is pivotally mounted to the assembly frame.

44. (new) A shearing assembly according to either claim 42, wherein the shearing block is angularly adjustable relative to the frame.

45. (new) A shearing assembly according to claim 44, wherein the cutting element and shearing block are mounted to a common sub-frame pivotally mounted to the assembly frame.